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May 12, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR DONALD P. GREGG
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Executive Assistant to the Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Pentagon

MICHAEL A. GUHIN
Counsellor
Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

SUBJECT: Discussion Paper for NSC Meeting, Tuesday May 17, 1983 (C)

The attached IG paper is provided for your use as the discussion paper for the NSC meeting on MBFR to be held on Tuesday, May 17, 1983 in the Cabinet Room, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (C)

Carolyn S. Cleveland for
John M. Poindexter
Military Assistant to the
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

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MBFR Options

Executive Summary

The key issues are:

1) Should we continue to hold to our present position in the Vienna negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Central Europe (MBFR)? In particular, should we continue to insist on the Western requirement, reaffirmed in last year's NATO Summit and embodied in the Western draft treaty tabled last July, for agreed data on Eastern force levels as a prerequisite to signing an MBFR treaty?

Or should we explore professed Eastern willingness to accept effective measures to verify reductions and limitations in exchange for possible Western willingness to postpone agreement on data?

2) If we decide to explore, should we do so within the framework of a specific option linking data and verification?

Data and Verification

The 10-year-old negotiations are stalled over two main issues: data and verification.

The data issue is a dispute over the current size of Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe. The East claims it has less than a million men, but our intelligence estimates more than 1,200,000. Agreement on starting data is needed in order to obtain Eastern agreement on the size of asymmetric reductions to parity and the level of post-reduction force ceilings at each stage of reductions.

On verification, the Soviets have not accepted the specific measures proposed by the West. Soviet agreement to these measures is important for both intelligence monitoring and compliance. The measures include:

-- permanent exit/entry points to monitor Soviet withdrawals;

-- mobile teams of Western inspectors to spot-check Warsaw Pact forces in the area up to 18 times a year; and

-- periodic exchanges of detailed force data.

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Recently, the Soviets have proposed the outlines of a trade-off between data and verification: if the West would step back from its data requirement, the East would be more forthcoming on verification. The Soviets have not given us any details, and we do not know whether they are serious. It is clear, however, that there can be no movement in MBFR without movement on the data and verification issues.

Options:

The basic choice, then, is between holding to our current position on pre-agreed data and accepting continued stalemate in the negotiations, or exploring possible alternatives that exploit Eastern hints of possible willingness to accept our verification measures in the hope of breaking out of the stalemate without incurring major new risks. This basic choice is posed by the first two options in the attached paper:

1. Make no change in our negotiating position, but do more in publicizing attractive features of our position: e.g., associated measures and verification.

2. Conduct an intensified probe of the Soviet position on verification, while signaling possible flexibility as to the timing of a data agreement.

An exploratory approach (Option 2) could be implemented either on its own or within the framework of one of the following specific options:

3. Offer to defer agreement on data until after signature of an MBFR treaty, but before actual reductions, if the Soviets will first implement acceptable verification measures.

4. Agree to small, initial US and Soviet manpower reductions if the Soviets will agree to implement acceptable verification measures leading to agreed data on force levels, following this initial reduction.

5. Offer to postpone data agreement in return for Eastern acceptance of the entire Western program of reductions to parity including effective verification of reductions and force levels at each stage.

Tactics:

If we decide to change our position, we will then need to decide whether to introduce the new approach with the Soviets bilaterally or in the formal multilateral negotiation. If we choose to do the former, we will need to decide upon the degree of prior consultation with our Allies.

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MBFR OPTIONS

Background: Negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) in Central Europe, involving 12 members of NATO and the 7 Warsaw Pact members, have been going on in Vienna since 1973 without concrete results.

The primary Western objective in the talks is to eliminate the Eastern manpower superiority of about 208,000 men in Central Europe (see Table 1). To accomplish this, the West has proposed that each side reduce its ground force manpower to equal levels of 700,000 ground personnel and 900,000 ground and air force personnel combined. Reductions would be in four fully verifiable stages over 7 years. Starting manpower totals for both sides would be specified in the treaty. The first stage would be limited to US and Soviet ground force reductions of 13,000 and 30,000 respectively. After 7 years, the West would have reduced by about 107,000 men and the East, by about 315,000.

The data dispute

The East agrees in principle that the end result of reductions should be East-West parity at lower force levels. However, the East claims that there is rough parity right now. To support this claim, the East has deliberately understated its manpower total by around 235,000 men. This lower Eastern figure would imply Eastern reductions of around 97,000 -- actually 10,000 men smaller than the Western reduction.

To provide an objective basis for setting the size of reductions needed to reach parity, the West has insisted on reaching agreement on the present strength of Eastern forces as a pre-condition for signing an MBFR treaty. NATO has confidence in its data. The East insists, however, that its own data are correct, and has stubbornly refused to cooperate in resolving the discrepancy. A high-ranking Soviet military officer recently told a US representative in Vienna that "if the sides continued to stick on the data question, it was 100 percent certain that there would be no way out of the deadlock .... If the West continued to concentrate on data, the discussion could last another 10 years."

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Verification

Another key issue which has blocked progress in the negotiations is Soviet refusal to indicate whether the East will accept effective measures of verification. Eastern representatives have never addressed in detail the verification measures which the West tabled last July, along with its draft treaty. These measures include:

-- Western observers at permanent entry/exit points to monitor Soviet forces entering and leaving Central Europe.

-- An annual quota of 18 ground and/or aerial inspections on demand in the territory of the other side in Central Europe.

-- Exchanges of information on forces to be withdrawn, and periodic exchanges of information on personnel strengths and the organization of forces in Central Europe.

The Soviets have said they could agree to observers at temporary exit points to monitor troop withdrawals, but they have not formally accepted permanent exit/entry points. They have declared that the Western proposal for inspection on demand is unacceptable. Finally, while they are willing to exchange data on forces to be withdrawn, they have not accepted the Western proposal for a detailed exchange of information on residual forces. There have, however, been hints of possible Eastern flexibility on all of these points.

Soviet agreement to all the verification measures we have proposed is important for both intelligence monitoring and compliance. With the help of these measures we would have high confidence in judging the fact and size of Eastern reductions. Our recent experience in monitoring the claimed Soviet 20,000-man withdrawal from East Germany demonstrated our ability without these measures to monitor reduction of large combat units (divisions and combat regiments/brigades) but also pointed up our inability to detect reduction of small, non-combat elements using national means alone.

The implementation of the verification measures also would facilitate Western monitoring of agreed residual ceilings but should not be expected to ensure detection of all potential Eastern violations. We would expect to continue to monitor large combat units with moderate to high confidence but, even with the full package of associated measures, we would have low confidence in our ability to estimate manpower in non-combat elements that make up some 25 percent of Pact ground forces. Even though on-site inspection could directly confirm Eastern

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force structure, our estimates of Pact manpower strengths would continue to be based largely on indirect methods. The measures would enhance Western confidence that we could detect and confirm potential ceiling violations that would threaten Western security, but any MBFR agreement based on manpower seems likely to require that the West accept a certain measure of uncertainty* about strict Eastern compliance.

Status of the negotations

The draft treaty we tabled in Vienna last July, though it met certain Eastern concerns, has not brought progress in the negotiations. The East has not reciprocated by moving on data or verification. Instead, the East has recently proposed that:

-- the US and USSR reduce their forces by mutual example, outside the framework of an agreement. The US would reduce 13,000 men; the USSR, 20,000**. Soviet withdrawals could be observed by Western inspectors at fixed exit points.

-- Following this, both sides would reduce to parity. There would be no agreement on data, and each side would determine the size of its own reductions. If the West were willing to drop data agreement as a pre-condition to reductions, then the East would be willing to "consider" mutually acceptable measures to verify the levels of forces remaining after reductions.

Thus, the East has formally suggested the outlines of a possible bargain on the two issues that have stalemated the negotiations: data and verification. How this would work, however, is completely unclear. All the Soviets have offered, in the context of their own proposal, is temporary exit points to monitor Soviet withdrawals, plus exchange of information on units to be withdrawn.

* See Verification Annex (Attachment 2) for a more detailed discussion of the problems of monitoring and verification.

**We believe that the Soviets may at some point later this year withdraw 20,000 soldiers unilaterally, with attendant fanfare.

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Second, it is not clear how any amount of verification, in itself, could contribute to inducing the East to make the very large, asymmetrical reductions needed to reach parity. In fact, the West's requirement under its current draft treaty to verify all Eastern reductions is incongruent with the East's desire to avoid admitting de facto that its data were false. According to Western data, the East would need to reduce 315,000 men. According to Eastern data tabled three years ago, it would reduce 97,000 men. Unless the categories of manpower counted were redefined, the East would need to withdraw or demobilize some 218,000 men voluntarily (a sheer improbability), or the outcome of the Eastern approach would not be parity.

Issue: Without movement on data and verification, there clearly can be no progress in MBFR. The issue, therefore, is whether, in the search for possible progress, we could agree to postpone the Western requirement for agreed data on Eastern force levels in exchange for Eastern acceptance of effective monitoring and verification procedures -- and still achieve an MBFR agreement leading to parity at reduced levels.

Realistically, the chances are slim for achieving an agreement which provides for both full parity and effective verification. This does not mean, however, that there may not be advantages in pursuing approaches which move off our traditional attachment to data agreement as a precondition.

Allied Views

The FRG and UK are the major Allied players in MBFR. France is not a participant, and the French insist that their forces not be covered in any way by an MBFR agreement. UK and especially FRG officials have indicated they believe a new Western initiative which at least appeared to move the talks forward would be useful in stressing Western commitment to arms control and in preventing the Soviets from seizing the propaganda initiative with its "reductions by mutual example" proposal or by a possible unilateral reduction. Moreover, the FRG sees an MBFR agreement as one possible way of dealing with likely future difficulties in filling the ranks of the Bundeswehr.

At the same time, British and German desire for progress in MBFR is constrained by other factors. The UK has always been skeptical about obtaining an agreement acceptable to the West. The FRG realizes that it would be the only major power fully subject to all the provisions of an MBFR treaty.

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British and German views differ over what a new Western initiative might contain. The UK has traditionally insisted on the need for prior data agreement before signing an MBFR treaty, although there have been recent hints that a change of thinking may be underway. The FRG, in contrast, is attracted to other approaches which stress verification rather than data. One hope of the Germans is that such an approach -- particularly their own so-called "building block" approach to data disaggregation -- might encourage the Soviets to make clandestine withdrawals in order to bring their manpower figures into line with previously tabled Eastern data.

Options: How can we best take advantage of the current situation? Among the range of possibilities are the following five options:

-- Make no change in our negotiating position, but do more in publicizing attractive features of our position: e.g., associated measures and verification.

-- Conduct an intensified probe of the Soviet position on verification, while signalling possible flexibility as to the timing of a data agreement.

-- Offer to defer agreement on data until after signature of an MBFR treaty, but before actual reductions, if the Soviets will first implement acceptable verification measures.

-- Agree to small, initial US and Soviet manpower reductions if the Soviets will agree to implement acceptable verification measures leading to agreed data on force levels, following this initial reduction.

-- Offer to postpone data agreement in return for Eastern acceptance of the entire Western program of reductions to parity including effective verification of reductions and force levels at each stage.

Option 1: Hold to our current position: We would continue on our present tactical course in Vienna. We would maintain our position* on agreed data as a prerequisite to agreement, press the East on the need for effective verification, and seek to maintain the focus on the Western draft treaty. To counter Soviet charges that the West is blocking progress in an important arms control forum of direct interest to Euro-

* It is assumed in all of the options that all elements of the Western position remain unchanged except as otherwise indicated.

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peans, we would need to do better in publicly critiquing the inadequacy of the Soviet proposal and in publicizing the attractive features of the Western position: for example, associated measures and verification.

Discussion: The current Western position is a defensible and coherent one. It has in the past proven an effective vehicle for maintaining Allied unity in Vienna. Persisting in this approach will ensure that there is no progress in the negotiations. However, the other suggested options cannot assure that there will be progress. The current Western approach carries with it fewer risks than the alternatives. MBFR does not at present have high visibility with European publics; however, signs of possible progress could lead to strong pressures in Western Europe to compromise essential Western goals in MBFR in order to bring about quick reductions. If agreement were actually reached, pressures on Western defense budgets and force modernization programs would intensify. Moreover, an agreement to reduce manpower would do nothing to rectify the large imbalance of armaments in Central Europe, nor could it adequately compensate the West for the geographic asymmetry which favors the Soviet Union. No matter how much it withdraws, the Soviet Union could always return its forces to Central Europe more rapidly and easily than the US, UK and Canada.

On the other hand, if tangible progress in arms control is desired in the near term, MBFR is a plausible candidate. MBFR is a mature negotiation and substantial progress has been made on a number of issues, including agreement in principle to take reductions to manpower parity of 900,000 soldiers and airmen, with a 700,000 subceiling on soldiers. Movement in MBFR could relieve some of the pressures in the INF and START talks by demonstrating Alliance willingness to reach arms control agreements with the Soviets if the agreement enhances Western security interests. Moreover, MBFR progress could help stabilize intra-Alliance defense contributions and fend off Congressional pressures for unilateral US troop cuts in Europe.

The Soviets, who are pressing hard for MBFR progress in 1983, may prove more flexible this year than they will for some time thereafter. Some German officials are increasingly skeptical about the need for pre-agreed data at the start of any agreement. The Germans are interested in a positive response to the Eastern proposal in order to maintain the West's initiative in MBFR and to help ease domestic pressure for arms control progress. FRG officials suggest that such progress would facilitate INF deployments and help them with the demographic problem of diminishing numbers of draft-age Germans. Failure to get a serious negotiation underway in MBFR will intensify Allied interest in MBFR in favor of a CDE.

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Option 2: Explore more aggressively Eastern willingness to accept effective verification. Without putting forward a new proposal of our own, we would on a bilateral basis press Eastern representatives hard to give us more specific indications of what verification measures they might be prepared to accept, while signaling possible flexibility in the US position on a data agreement as a prerequisite to reductions. We would make clear that at some stage verification must lead to agreed data or that both sides will have to confront data as a treaty compliance issue. We would also press them on their willingness to take sizeable asymmetrical reductions.

This option could either stand alone or be combined with any of the following options.

Discussion: This approach does not commit us to any specific course and maintains our ultimate objective. It could, however, give us a better view of whether the Soviets might really be willing to agree on acceptable verification measures before we move on data. It would also enable us to maintain the formal Alliance position on data until and unless we receive firmer and more detailed Soviet assurances with respect to verification and reductions. It would obviate the need to choose any particular option now until we see more clearly what the Soviets are prepared to do. For these reasons, this approach would be the easiest one to adopt, should we consider modifying our position on pre-agreed data.

On the other hand, the long-term Western requirement for prior agreed data is sound. Prior agreed data would provide an objective criterion both for determining initial and subsequent reduction amounts and for challenging compliance. Once we signal flexibility on data, it may be difficult to return to our original position if the Soviets are inflexible on verification. In addition, the appearance of movement on data could create expectations for quick reductions. The Allies are basically united around the present Western position and there is no strong, high-level pressure from within the Alliance to change this position, nor is MBFR a highly visible public issue at present. (This situation could change, however, if the US were to decide to reject the Eastern proposals.) Since a probe on verification would be conducted privately and bilaterally, there would be no benefits in terms of public impact. Finally, unless we had a concrete idea of how far we were prepared to move from our current insistence on data agreement as a prerequisite to an MBFR treaty, this approach could lead us in uncertain directions.

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Attachment 3 to this paper is a draft instruction to Ambassador Abramowitz which shows how Option 2 might be implemented. This draft is purely illustrative: actual instructions would of course be fully coordinated on an interagency basis.

Option 3: Verifying force levels after treaty signature but before reductions. We would maintain the present Western approach of seeking agreement on staged reductions to parity, plus the verification measures we have proposed. However, instead of insisting that both sides reach data agreement on existing force levels as a prerequisite to signing an MBFR treaty, we would agree to postpone data agreement until after treaty signature. In exchange, the East would have to agree to implement the full package of on-site verification measures before there were any reductions. On-site inspection of selected Eastern units would provide useful additional evidence to support Western intelligence estimates of Eastern strength. This evidence could put pressure on the East either to agree to Western data, change the nature of the current discussion, or bring reality into line with its claims by unilaterally reducing its forces before inspection came into effect. To avoid such a choice, the East would of course have a strong motive for rejecting this option in the first place. If, however, data agreement were reached following the application of the verification measures, then reductions in stages, separated by further verification, would follow. The Soviets would almost certainly balk at effective implementation of the verification provisions before reductions, while casting blame on the West for basically continuing its demand for data.

Discussion: Such a proposal would allow us to counter Eastern charges that we are using the data issue to block agreement on reductions. It would have some public appeal -- at least, until it became apparent that a reductions agreement was no closer than before, at which point both Soviet stalling on verification and public pressures on Western governments for "progress" would increase. It would remove exchange of agreed data as a precondition for agreement, while retaining the long-standing principle that force sizes must be agreed and verified -- in this case with the help of on-the-ground inspection techniques -- prior to implementation of reductions. This is close to some ideas the FRG has floated. In substance, this option is compatible with the current Western draft treaty. However, in postponing resolution of the data problem to the verification phase, this option does not solve the problem of Soviet stalling on implementation.

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The East is most unlikely to accept this suggested approach because de facto Western satisfaction on the current size of Eastern force levels would still be a precondition to reductions, and because we would be adding another pre-condition -- actual implementation of on-site inspection prior to reductions. Although the Soviets would hope to negotiate specific verification measures to their advantage, they would know that unless they withdrew a considerable number of troops before the agreement entered into force or redefined the data problem, the risk that the West would expose their data as false would be increased. Eastern reductions not monitored by these verification measures would, however, likely be largely unaccounted for by Western intelligence. In addition, Western publics might become increasingly impatient with their own governments' failure to "reciprocate".

Option 4: Small reduction step before verification. We could offer to postpone data agreement until after a modest US-Soviet initial reduction, provided the Soviets agreed at the outset to the verification measures we have proposed. These measures would be implemented as reductions began. For example, we could seek agreement on withdrawal of 13,000 US and 30,000 Soviet soldiers to be verified by observers at designated exit points -- a verification measure the Soviets have offered. After reductions were completed, US and Soviet forces would be frozen for a limited period of time (with agreed exceptions), information on the structure and manpower strengths of residual US and Soviet forces would be exchanged, and these residual levels would be verified. Other participants in the MBFR negotiations would accept a commitment not to increase their forces in Central Europe. If agreement were reached on US and Soviet force levels, negotiations on effectively verified larger reductions to parity, including the forces of other MBFR participants, would continue.

Discussion: This option could provide an acceptable way actually to make visible progress in the negotiations. Since the Soviets would be withdrawing nearly two and one-half times as many men as the US, it would establish the principle of asymmetric reductions. Similar in concept to the Western proposal for an interim phase one agreement tabled in 1979, the option would be more attractive to the Soviets than option 3, in that it entails actual US withdrawals before verification begins. If the East did not honor its commitments to verification, the US would have withdrawn only 13,000 men.

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Although such a U.S. reduction would not be large enough to endanger NATO security, it might nonetheless be difficult to restore once implemented. This approach (like the alternatives) would not offer a clear way for resolving the 235,000-man discrepancy between Eastern and Western data on Eastern forces. Post-reduction data agreement, even on US and Soviet residual force levels, might therefore be difficult or impossible to achieve. The result would be an ambivalent situation. Yet, pressures in Congress and in Western Europe for further reductions might be strong and hard to resist, and the Soviets might feel they would be able to impede effective verification once the Western reductions had begun. Even if this approach were successful, there is no guarantee that follow-on negotiations would result in agreement on reductions to parity.

Option 5: US Rep Option

To guide an exploration with the Soviets our MBFR representative proposes the following option:

Postpone data agreement in return for Eastern acceptance of the entire process of verifiable reductions to parity. We would indicate that we could drop the requirement for prior data agreement if the Soviets accept at the outset a complete verifiable reduction and limitation package including the following basic steps: (a) verifiable initial US and Soviet reductions of 13,000 and 30,000, respectively; (b) a no-increase commitment by all direct participants verified by the West's full package of verification measures, including an exchange by both sides of detailed disaggregated data; (c) a determination, one year after the no-increase commitment has been in effect, that neither side has more forces in the area than indicated by its own official data; and (d) reductions to parity in verifiable stages.

Discussion: Many of the basic advantages and disadvantages of this option are similar to those of Option 4. In addition, by requiring that Eastern manpower be within the levels indicated by the East's own data one year after a verifiable no-increase obligation has been in effect, this option would at least present the Soviets with something of a dilemma: ask for exclusion of certain Eastern forces from the data base (thereby admitting indirectly the error in earlier Eastern figures); remove substantial forces surreptitiously; a combination of the two; or continue to dispute Western data despite the application of the verification measures, including the provision of disaggregated data.

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This approach would ensure that initial US-Soviet reductions do not commence until the Soviets have agreed to the whole process of verifiable reductions to parity. It would provide for a verification "call" before reductions by all direct participants get underway. It would hold the Soviets responsible for the East's official figures. Allied acceptance of this approach should not be difficult, since data agreement would only be postponed, not dropped, and the reduction and limitation package would be completely within the framework of the current Western draft treaty.

On the other hand, it would be difficult to obtain Soviet acceptance of this approach, particularly full verification of the no-increase agreement. It may not produce formal data agreement. It still would not do away with the possibility that once the US-Soviet reductions have been taken, the Soviets would try to fudge the verification measures initially agreed upon or begin another data dispute.

Attachments:

Table 1 (data on NATO and Warsaw Pact Manpower)
Table 2 (data on US and Soviet Ground Force Manpower)
Attachment 1 - A Notional MBFR Scenario
Attachment 2 - Verification Annex
Attachment 3 - Illustrative Draft Instructions to Amb. Abramowitz

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TABLE 1

NATO and Warsaw Pact Manpower in the MBFR Reductions Area

Western data (as of January 1982)

NATO ground forces	806,100
NATO air forces	200,600
NATO total	1,006,700
WP ground forces	976,100
WP air forces	238,500
WP total	1,214,600

Eastern tabled data (as of Sept 1980)

(There is no dispute over the size of Western forces)

WP ground forces	796,700
WP air forces	182,300
WP total	979,000

Disparity between NATO and WP

Ground forces	170,000
Air forces	37,900
Total disparity	207,900

Discrepancy between Western and Eastern data

WP ground forces	179,400
WP air forces	56,200
WP total	235,600

Size of Reductions to 700,000 ground/900,000 ground and air combined

According to Western data:
West reduces 106,700
East reduces 314,600

According to Eastern data:
West reduces 106,700
East reduces 96,700

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TABLE 2

US and Soviet Ground Force Manpower in Central Europe

	Western Figures	Eastern Tabled Figures	Discrepancy
US	213,900	----	----
USSR	486,500	404,800	81,700

Western Proposal (Initial or Stage One Reductions)

	US	USSR
current level	213,900	486,500
reduction	- 13,000	- 30,000
residual level	200,900	456,500

Eastern Proposal ("Mutual Example")

	US	USSR
current level	213,900	404,800 (the Soviet figure)
reduction	-13,000	-20,000
residual level	200,900	384,800

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Attachment 1

A NOTIONAL MBFR SCENARIO

1. Decision paper sent to the NSC
2. US decision on an approach
3. High-level consultation with UK and FRG
4. Bilateral approach to the Soviets in Washington
5. Further consultation with UK and FRG (and France?)
6. Follow-up bilateral explorations with Soviets in Vienna
7. High-level message to all NATO Allies
8. Presentation of approach to NAC (in restricted session) to develop broad guidance
9. Ad Hoc Group follow-through in plenaries and informal sessions in Vienna

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Attachment 2

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Verification Annex to the MBFR Options Paper

Summary

This brief assessment of US MBFR monitoring capabilities concludes that Intelligence could promptly detect and report violations large enough to pose significant threats to NATO security in Central Europe. While negotiated verification measures would allow for high confidence in judging the fact and size of Soviet withdrawals and at least moderate confidence in East European reductions, they would only modestly enhance existing unilateral capabilities for monitoring residual ceilings. They should not be expected to ensure detection of all potential Eastern violations, especially marginal ones.

Intelligence would expect to continue to monitor large combat units with moderate to high confidence but, even with the full package of associated measures, it would have low confidence in its ability to estimate manpower in non-combat elements that make up some 25 percent of Pact ground forces. Even though on-site inspection could help confirm the structure of individual units, estimates of Pact manpower strengths would continue to be based largely on indirect methods. The measures would enhance Western confidence of detecting and confirming potential ceiling violations that would threaten Western security, but any MBFR agreement based on manpower seems likely to require that the West accept a certain measure of uncertainty about strict Eastern compliance.

General Intelligence Monitoring Capabilities

1. The selection of manpower as the basis for MBFR poses verification difficulties that are much more severe than any associated with strategic forces arms control. This is because intelligence has no direct means for counting Warsaw Pact military personnel and must therefore estimate manpower totals by inference from force structure. As a result, there is some imprecision inherent in these estimates.

2. With associated measures in place, however, Intelligence could monitor promptly and with high confidence the withdrawal of large Soviet combat units from the reductions area. It would be

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confident that most of the men and major weapons associated with the units had been withdrawn, but some uncertainty might persist indefinitely as to whether marginal cheating on disposal of men or weapons had occurred. It could have only moderate confidence in monitoring the disbandment of indigenous Eastern units, and then only if their equipment were removed, mothballed, or scrapped. Intelligence would have low confidence in its capacity to monitor reductions of indigenous manpower and equipment not in units.

3. In the post-reductions phase, there is high confidence that Intelligence would promptly detect the formation of large Soviet combat units. It would be difficult, however, even with associated measures, to make a prompt assessment of the net effect of such an action on overall troop levels if the activity involved only one or two such units. Moreover, it would be extremely difficult to detect, especially in the short term, a covert, incremental introduction of Soviet troops distributed among units already existing in the area unless increases were very large. Even large increases could take months to demonstrate conclusively with high confidence. Increases by indigenous forces could be even more difficult to detect than Soviet increases.

The Value of Associated Measures

4. Associated measures would modestly enhance our monitoring capability. They would be most helpful for monitoring reductions; probably less helpful, although still valuable, for monitoring post-reduction ceilings. Each of the verification measures currently proposed by the West is assessed below according to its potential contribution to monitoring Eastern troop levels.

5. Inspection. An inspection system which provided for periodic direct access to Eastern military units would improve our ability to monitor MBFR reductions and limitations by:

-- helping clarify the structure of residual Eastern forces upon which our manpower assessments are based;

-- helping confirm that preannounced Eastern reductions occurred in fact;

-- engaging the East in a verification arrangement that would increase the perceived risk of detection of marginal cheating for the sake of small gains in military advantage.

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6. An inspection measure will contribute most heavily to the assessment of Eastern force structure. It could help improve further the Intelligence Community's fairly good understanding of the structure of large Eastern combat formations -- especially divisions -- which comprise more than half of Eastern ground forces manpower. More importantly, it could help define elements of the Eastern force structure which currently are invisible or at best vaguely defined, such as certain rear services units and organizations. An inspection system would not, however, enable Intelligence to by-pass the estimative process and obtain direct accountings of the manpower strengths of Eastern forces. The degree of intrusiveness required even to attempt this would likely be non-negotiable and reciprocally unacceptable.

7. Information Exchange. The Western proposal for an exchange of information is potentially the most important of the cooperative verification procedures proposed by the West. This measure would require the East periodically (e.g., annually) to provide detailed information on the structure and manpower strength of its forces in the MBFR area down to the level of small units. Such an exchange would give us a detailed Eastern statement of its forces against which Intelligence could more easily direct its monitoring resources, including any inspections, and would be a baseline against which compliance challenges could be made.

8. Entry/Exit Points and Prior Notification. The West also proposes that all Soviet forces entering and leaving Central Europe be required to pass through designated entry/exit points permanently manned by Western observers, and that prior notification be given if a move into the reductions area involves more than one complete division or more than 25,000 individual soldiers in one calendar month. Coupled with the prenotification of Soviet withdrawal plans, these measures would be critically important in establishing high-confidence monitoring of Soviet force withdrawals and would improve the Intelligence Community's ability to determine whether post-reduction Soviet troop movements into and out of Central Europe were violating post-reduction limitations.

9. The Issue of Warning Versus Verification. A basic premise of the Western MBFR position is that the outcome should reduce the disparity in military forces in Central Europe and that such an outcome would enhance Western security -- especially against short warning attack. In particular, a number of Soviet combat divisions probably would be removed from the reductions area to the USSR from whence their movement back toward Central Europe would provide additional warning.

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10. It is also expected that the associated measures in the agreement would contribute to better warning intelligence, as well as aiding verification and generally enhancing confidence and stability. It is reasonable to assume that the East would be unlikely to risk being caught at marginal cheating for the sake of small gains in military advantage. If the East did violate the agreement it would be much more likely to do so for large gains that would involve major force changes which intelligence should detect promptly.

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Attachment 3

ILLUSTRATIVE DRAFT INSTRUCTIONS
TO
AMBASSADOR ABRAMOWITZ

1. You are authorized to explore bilaterally with the Soviet representative the possibilities for achieving genuine and timely progress in the MBFR negotiations.

2. You should base this exploration upon the following approach:

a. The US has reviewed its position on the Vienna negotiations and has reaffirmed its view that substantial verifiable reductions to parity in military manpower in Central Europe would enhance stability and reduce the risks of conflict in Europe.

b. We thus noted with interest that the latest Eastern proposals confirmed the interest of the Soviet leadership in reaching the agreed common ceilings of 900,000 soldiers and airmen, with a subceiling of 700,000 ground forces. We also noted with interest that these proposals endorse the principle that post-reductions levels, as well as reductions, should be verified and that reductions to parity by all direct participants should be negotiated within a single agreement.

c. The US believes that any further progress in Vienna must be based on agreement on effective verification measures. If the Soviets are prepared to accept the entire package of reductions and associated measures the West has proposed, including large asymmetrical reductions to parity and effective measures of verification, we would be prepared to modify our position that agreement on the existing number of Eastern forces in Central Europe is needed before reductions can begin.

3. You should keep your FRG and UK colleagues informed on these explorations.

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